



*Make Prevention a CHOICE*

## **Mood Management: Coping With “The Blues”**

Everyone gets “the blues.” It’s as normal as feeling any other emotion. However, we’re often unsure of how, or if, we can make ourselves feel better. The first step is to understand what our feelings and thoughts show about our state of mind. For each set of statements, circle the phrase that best describes your outlook when you have “the blues”:

1.     A) I have “the blahs.” I don’t feel emotions at my usual intensity.  
       B) I have intense feelings of hopelessness, despair, etc. Sometimes I feel absolutely nothing.  
       C) I don’t have time to stop and figure out what I’m feeling.
  
2.     A) I feel “down” now, but I can certainly remember the last time I felt “up”, and it wasn’t that long ago.  
       B) I can’t really remember the last time I felt anything besides this emotional pain.  
       C) It’s difficult for me to remember feeling anything except frazzled and frustrated.
  
3.     A) I feel impatient with my usual activities, but it takes more effort to accomplish things.  
       B) It’s hard to imagine I’ll ever feel pleasure or be happy again. Being depressed is not just how I feel, it’s who I am.  
       C) I wish things would slow down just enough for me to catch my breath. I could sure use some help and cooperation.
  
4.     A) I can continue with my usual activities, but it takes more effort to accomplish things.  
       B) I can hardly drag myself out of bed. Even getting dressed is a major chore. I don’t seem to want to do anything.  
       C) I manage to do what I need to do, but I forget things, make lots of silly mistakes, and keep misplacing important items.
  
5.     A) All my self-esteem and self-confidence are lower than usual. I feel blue, my self-confidence goes down, then I feel more blue, etc.  
       B) I have little or no self-esteem. I’m overwhelmed with feelings and thoughts of unworthiness, guilt, self-blame, etc.  
       C) I feel inadequate and guilty about all the things I haven’t done. I keep telling myself that I should be more organized, but I just can’t seem to pull it off.

6. A) I haven't thought seriously about or planned suicide, but I sure have had impulses to "escape" from time to time.  
 B) I often think of death or suicide. I've even made plans. I often have fantasies about disappearing.  
 C) I daydream about escaping to a place where I do nothing but sleep, eat, and relax, and nice people take care of all my needs.

**ANSWERS**

If most of your answers were **C**, you probably have a stress overload rather than "the blues." Ask for our Stress Management handout in addition to following up on the resources listed below.

If most of your answers were **A**, you are probably experiencing episodes of mild to moderate depression. Follow up on the resources listed below so that you can better manage your moods.

If you chose one or more **B** statements, it is likely that you are experiencing the Illness of Depression. We strongly encourage you to seek professional assistance. You can feel better!

Challenging and changing our beliefs and attitudes is the next step in managing our low moods. Harriet Braiker, author of Getting Up When You're Feeling Down, calls this "mental re-wiring", that is, unplugging self-defeating attitudes and re-wiring self-enhancing thoughts in their place. Here are a few "mindsets" she suggests we consider:

**UNPLUG:**

**RE-WIRE:**

I'm so depressed; I just can't help it.

I feel down but there are things I can do to get my mood in a better place.

I am causing my depressed mood and I feel guilty.

My feelings are not my fault. Low moods happen to everyone. I'm lucky because I know how to help myself.

I have no right to feel down.

I feel down and it has nothing to do with logic or "rights." It's just a low mood and I know how to respond.

If I control my moods, I'll become cold, unfeeling, and less of a person.

By learning to better control my moods, I'll have more choice about where, how, and to whom I express my emotions, and I'll be more confident and successful.

I just have the blues, and it's nothing to even bother even bother with or take seriously.

I need to find out what's bothering me and respond in positive ways that will reduce the negative feelings.

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